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King Kamehameha played an crucial role in Hawaiian history. He was the first king to unite the islands not only through warfare but also diplomacy. He was also concerned with protecting the Hawaiian islands, through the use of diplomacy and the council of not only his Chiefs or ali’i but through the use of haole or foreigners, and he accomplished much in the ways of securing a foothold for Hawaiian interests. Through his mana or power, more specifically his power of will he forged an incredibly unified and prosperous Hawaii.

Kamehameha was born in the Kohala district of the island of Hawaii and his birth according to Beamer (2014), “been prophesied to cause the downfall of the current chiefs and to ascend to a height of power previously unattained.” (pg. 68). Because of the prophecy surrounding his birth he was taken away in the middle of the night for protection. After he had matured he returned to the court of the mo'i Alapa'i Nui who was succeeded by Kamehameha’s uncle Kalani'opu'u. When Kalani’opu’u passed he awarded his son Kiwala’o the right to rule and Kamehameha the god Kuka’ilimoku. Shortly after Kiwala’o passed away leaving the island of Hawaii divided between three chiefs.

During the time of Kamehameha’s conquest of the Hawaiian islands many foreign visitors had been landing in Hawaii bringing with them gunpowder and guns, changing Hawaiian warfare. Through these changes in warfare Kamehameha was found to be the better general employing a combination of ancient Hawaiian warfare with the use of the new technology and conquered from his island of Hawaii all the way to Oah’u. Defeating Kalanikupule he ruled all of the islands except for Kaua’i. This is where Kamehameha’s skills at diplomacy come in after two failed attacks on Kaua’i he decides to treat with Kaumuali’i, the mo’i of Kaua’i. Through this treaty King Kamehameha was the first Hawaiian ruler of the entire chain of Hawaiian islands.

King Kamehameha’s skills at diplomacy is shown again through the allegiance he gained from his British captives, more specifically John Young. Through his use of John Young Kamehameha had much contact with the British which was regarded as the most powerful country in the world at the time. John Young became an essential adviser to Kamehameha and through Young’s council and Kamehameha’s charisma an alliance was formed with the British. He guaranteed a safe port in the Pacific and in return gained assurances that the Hawaiian Islands would remain unharmed.

King Kamehameha was described by Kuykendall *Hawaiian Kingdom* “universally recognized as the most outstanding of all the Hawaiian chiefs of his own and of all other epochs” (pg. 71) and he did much to secure protection of the Hawaiian Islands and their culture. Through charisma and warfare he created a unified Hawaii protected from foreign powers and prosperous. He was a disciplined charismatic man with a vision of a unified Hawaii that he passed on to his son Liholiho and without question one of the greatest monarchs ever to rule.

Bibliography

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